

October 7, 2015

Bill Honig and Nancy McTygue, Co-Chairs
History-Social Science Subject Matter Committee
Instructional Quality Commission
1430 N Street, Suite #5111
Sacramento, CA 95814
Email: hssframework@cde.ca.gov

RE: History-Social Science Framework Revisions To Be Discussed on October 8-9, 2015

Dear Co-Chairs Honig and McTygue:

We are writing to provide our comments on the revised History–Social Science Framework for California Public Schools that you will be discussing at your meeting on October 8-9, 2015. We appreciate that you have made many revisions that now include LGBT Americans in history and social science instruction, as required under the FAIR Education Act.

However, we are deeply disappointed and concerned that you have not included the edits we recommended about discussions of gender roles, sexuality and Two-Spirit people in the 4th grade or 8th grade instruction about Native Californian tribes and the effects of colonization.

Two-Spirit refers to the commonly shared notion among many Native American tribes that some individuals naturally possess and manifest both masculine and feminine spiritual qualities. American society commonly identifies Two-Spirit People as Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or Transgender.

We are writing to you today as the leadership of all of the Two Spirit groups in California: the Bay Area American Indians Two-Spirits, Sacramento Valley Two Spirit Society, Idle No More Two Spirits on Ohlone Lands, Indian Canyon Two Spirit Society, and City of Angels Two Spirit Society.*

The revised Framework continues to devote a great deal of attention to teaching California students about Native Americans, including several Native Californian tribes. To accurately and fully understand the culture of various Native Californian tribes, we believe it is vital that Two-Spirit people be included. Revising the Framework to include Two-Spirit people will help all California students develop a historically accurate understanding of the spiritual and cultural significance of Two-Spirit people among Native American communities.

We wish to reiterate our strong recommendation to include the following edits to the History-Social Science Framework.

GRADE 4

On page 93, line 246, insert: “Teachers may also explore the ways in which Spanish missionaries worked to fundamentally alter Native Californian cultures by trying to eliminate gender and sexuality identities and practices among the Indians that Spanish felt were unacceptable.”

On page 95, line 290, insert a new paragraph: ““By exploring Native Californian cultures, students also learn that some Native California cultures accepted third gender roles for females who preferred to assume men’s social roles and males who assumed women’s social roles. Such gender diversity often did not fit well with the gender order of Spanish missionaries.” Teachers can discuss how tribes such as the Klamath, Tolowa, Yuki, Gabrielino, and Chumash recognized males who preferred to dress and live as women and, in some cases, women who preferred to dress and live as men. Some California tribes granted such two-spirit people important spiritual and social roles, sometimes including marriage. To exemplify how the Spanish did not accept such Native Californian traditions, teachers and students could explore the well-documented 18th-century case of a Chumash male-to-female person who, after Santa Clara Mission friars ordered the person to give up women’s clothing and work, ran away from the Mission and resumed a two-spirit identity in the tribe.”

GRADE 5

On p. 125, line 92, insert this sentence: “Students also learn how many American Indian tribes included those referred to by modern scholars as two-spirits. These individuals were believed to manifest both masculine and feminine spirits and had distinct social roles that varied from tribe to tribe. These included healing, transmission of oral traditions and histories, fortune-telling, match-making, and the conferring of names. Two-spirits were respected and feared because of the qualities and abilities that accompanied their combination of gender attributes.”

GRADE 8

On p. 345, line 588, add: “explore the role and life of *Quanqon*, a Kutenai female-to-male person who assisted Europeans in their explorations of the Oregon Country;”

On p. 363, line 938, revise it to say: ““...Native American social systems related to governance, family diversity, and gender diversity, including two-spirit traditions.”

To fully implement and comply with the FAIR Education Act’s requirement that the roles and contributions of LGBT individuals be included throughout the History-Social Science

Framework, we believe that representations of Two-Spirit people must not be excluded. We hope that you will use the recommended revisions above in order for California students to fully appreciate and understand our roles and contributions, as Two-Spirit people, who are an important part of the diversity of California both historically and today.

If you have any questions regarding our recommendations for the History-Social Science Framework, please contact the Bay Area American Indian Two Spirits (admin@baait.org), and we can put you in touch with all of the signatories of this letter.

Sincerely,

Ruth Villasenor (Chiricahua Apache), Derek Smith (Sault Ste. Marie Chippewa), Jim Eagle (Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate), Nazbah Tom (Diné), and Aidan Dunn (Osage), Council of **Bay Area American Indian Two Spirits**

Jacob Dunlap (Lake Superior Ojibwe), Founder, **Sacramento Valley Two Spirit Society**

Kanyon Sayers Roods (Costanoan Ohlone/Chumash), Chairperson, **Indian Canyon Two Spirit Society**

Zephyr Elise (Yaqui), Chair, **Idle No More-Two Spirits on Ohlone Lands**

Hudson Tibbetts and Rachel Fernandez, Co-Chairs, and Dr. Gabriel Estrada , Secretary, **City of Angels Two-Spirit Society (CATSS)**

*The missions for the Two Spirit organizations signing this letter are as follows:

Bay Area American Indians Two-Spirits (BAAITS) exists to restore and recover the role of Two-Spirit people within the American Indian/First Nations community by creating a forum for the spiritual, cultural and artistic expression of Two-Spirit people. BAAITS helps Two-Spirit people explore their rich heritage and we offer events and activities for LGBT individuals of Native American ancestry.

Sacramento Valley Two Spirit Society (SV2SS)’s mission is to inform the Sacramento region about the cultural role of Two-Spirit people in Native cultures; to be of service to our community and create a safe space for Two-Spirit people to heal, grow and evolve.

Indian Canyon Two Spirit Society serves a rural, Central Valley two spirit population, providing support, education, and a place for ceremony. We work to restore the roles of Two Spirit people in our traditional Indigenous communities. Our annual gathering

offers California Native cultural activities for attendees. We also support incarcerated California Native Two Spirit people through correspondence.

Idle No More-Two Spirits on Ohlone Lands offers practical solidarity on the ground to the Ohlone nation on whose lands we occupy. We step forward in our traditional roles as two spirits to effect change, healing, and decolonization on the personal, community, local, national, and global levels regarding indigenous sovereignty/ visibility, critical environmental issues, missing & murdered indigenous womyn and two-spirits, etc.

City of Angels Two-Spirit Society (CATSS)'s mission is to provide support to the City of Angels American Indian/Alaska Native/1st Nation/indigenous Two-Spirit community and engender awareness of our traditional sacred role to the community of greater Los Angeles.